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Molly, and we left the Huei Huei city at a canter, pursued by a crowd of schoolboys offering higher prices than we had asked for the privilege of buying.

The next afternoon was spent in the Chinese city, where a quiet and respectful crowd stood around and conversed as we sat on benches, sipping tea, at the counter of the leading tradesman of the place. Our shopping expeditions have been infrequent during the years of our residence in China, it being more convenient for busy people who really want an article, to have a selection brought to the house for approval. On the few occasions, however, when we have visited a shop the expedition partook of the nature of a social event. On our arrival benches are drawn forward, tea served, and the master of the establishment, who converses on many topics, is flanked by a large group of apprentices, who are kept running to and fro fetching and carrying goods. On this occasion we wished to buy a few yards of silk and three face towels. The merchant, not loath to display his wide knowledge of the world before the admiring crowd, on hearing that we came from England, remarked: 'Ah! yes, the capital, London! A bigger city than Pekin. This is a good piece of silk. Is England a republic? Oh, a kingdom? I have heard that you are ruled by Upper and Lower Houses.' Meanwhile we examined every foot of the silk for uneven threads, while the crowd murmured: 'They know all about everything!' We had already impressed the multitude, by the fact that when our family names were asked for, one of us had answered: 'My name is Feng, with two drops of water,' by this means designating which of the many characters representing 'Feng' we indicated.

It seemed a pity to introduce business into such a social atmosphere, but when the silk had been weighed

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and priced, and the face towels selected, with a good deal of advice from the crowd, well-mannered bargaining began. Our basic offer was about half of the price written on the tag attached to the goods. The courteous merchant then smiled and indicated a notice hanging outside his shop: 'No prices discussed here,' to which the Greek chorus again echoed: 'He does not discuss the prices!' We affably acquiesced, but assured him that our money was insufficient for such an expensive outlay. With a wave of the hand, he met us half-way, saying: 'You are guests from a far country. Have a little more tea!' thus subtly indicating that the bargain was concluded. A chit was produced by one of the apprentices, and another began to rub down the ink on his slab, being careful in our presence to observe the Confucian dictum that when the 'Princely Man' rubs down his ink, no sound is ever heard. While he was thus occupied in preparing the materials necessary to write out the account, we rapidly noted the amount in pencil on paper, and waited to see if his tallied. 'Did you see that?' said a man at our elbow. 'You'll find that they are right, too Reading, writing and arithmetic are all quite easy to them!' We rose to leave, but as we did so we handed a packet of Christian books to the merchant, which he accepted with evident pleasure, then with sharp orders he dispersed the assistants and escorted us to our carriage.

Early one morning the landlord appeared at our door in a state of great agitation. A young woman, married to a relative of his, had poisoned herself with strychnine, and they urged us to go and make an attempt to save her life. 'Our own remedy,' he said, 'is mare's milk, and her husband is scouring the city to get some.' We were taken to the house where a young woman lay on

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563 refused by the Chinese authorities, as also a suggestion
361 that the building of the Russian Orthodox Church should be turned into a theatre. In the shops of this quarter there may be bought Russian bread, cakes and biscuits; also Russian boots, foreign cloth and galvanised pails and buckets of all kinds.

366 In another part of the town are streets of good Chinese shops, and here every variety of tinned food can be purchased, at prices which amply compensate the merchant for his trouble in the transit. The
563 Urumchi crowd presents special features which to us
492 were of absorbing interest. We were in a country where horsemanship is highly valued. The Mongol, Tibetan, Qazaq and Tungan are all splendid riders, though each has his own unmistakable style of handling a horse, and his own way of controlling it. The Russians and Siberians use Russian horses—fine-skinned, tall, and elegant—in contrast with the rough, shaggy Mongol pony, or the half tamed steed of the Tungan, who loves to gallop down the narrow streets,
563 scattering the populace as he goes. It was now that
291 we became familiar with the Qazaq—a broad-shouldered man, whose burly build is exaggerated by the wadded or
492 fur garments he wears both summer and winter alike. His home-made, high-heeled, tall leather boots were different in cut from those of the Mongolian, and his head-gear is a high-pointed cap, with a circular flap over each ear and on the shoulders. He was often seen riding a bullock, whose enormous flanks were surmounted by a small, wooden saddle, held in place by a
563 wide girth. When shopping he seldom dismounted,
• 437 but conducted his bargaining from his seat, and though he might know nothing of the Chinese language, the price was fixed by means of movements of the fingers, the buyer and seller each introducing his hand up the other's sleeve.